

The
Beauty
of
God

G. C. RECTOR



Class BR 125

Book F 38

Copyright N^o

COPYRIGHT DEPOSIT.

The Beauty of God

BY
G. C. RECTOR

NASHVILLE, TENN.
COKESBURY PRESS
1923

BR 125

R35

COPYRIGHT, 1923
BY
LAMAR & BARTON

OCT 20 '23

©CIA760448

no 1

To

MY MOTHER

HARRIET CAROLINE RECTOR

WHO LIVED A BEAUTIFUL LIFE ON EARTH
AND WHO NOW LIVES A MORE
BEAUTIFUL LIFE
IN HEAVEN

CONTENTS

	PAGE
INTRODUCTION.....	7
I. CREATOR AND CREATED.....	13
II. NATURE.....	17
III. MANIFOLD BEAUTY OF HUMAN LIFE.....	29
IV. JESUS CHRIST.....	72
V. CONCLUSION.....	113

INTRODUCTION

THERE is much paganism in the popular conception of beauty. In the distinction made between the material and the spiritual their relationship has been too often ignored. Both have a divine significance and fulfill a divine purpose. The world and the flesh have been classified with the devil because the devil has gotten into them. Get the devil out of them and the Christ into them and the world and the flesh become beautiful. God gave his Son to save the world. Our bodies are temples of the Holy Ghost.

Those who would be spiritually minded make a mistake when they relegate the utility and beauty of the material to those who are unspiritual. Unbelievers, in turn, have made much of physical beauty, even considering it of the highest import; not being able, through lack of spiritual apprehension, to relate the higher and the lower

in spiritual interpretation. There is much difference between the head and the feet, but still a connection. One could live without feet, but not without a head. However, the loss of feet entails a handicap. Beauty is a whole. It has higher forms and lower forms. If either of these forms is ignored, there is a serious loss.

Beauty is good and only good. Is there any beauty that is bad? No. Badness spoils beauty. Beauty being good, it must come from God. Is it not the privilege of the child of God to appropriate and interpret the gift? The mind and heart of Him who made the gift may then be better understood, and the blessing of what is given may be fully realized by the recipient.

This book is written with the hope of correcting, to some extent at least, the prevailing error that there are good things in this world that can be appropriated, used, and their intended benefits obtained apart from God. It cannot be done. Ignorantly and selfishly used, without reference to the

“Giver of every good and perfect gift,” life’s good things fail to yield their fullness of joy and satisfaction.

When we get rid of our paganism and become imbued with the spirit of truth and holiness, beauty of all kinds will suggest and, in some measure, express the ideas of harmony, order, symmetry, and grace existing in the divine mind. No physical form, no literary product, no painting, no statuary, no architecture, no music, no poem, no oratory will be considered beautiful unless it give some spiritual suggestion and bring the heart and mind in closer touch with God: when we get rid of our paganism.

Beauty has been desecrated. Dragged from her sacred relationship to Deity and made to minister to the pride and lust of those who have no fear of God before them, the visage of beauty has been strangely marred. The wreaths that misguided devotees of earth-born ideals have placed upon her brow are not becoming. The smoke

from altars where strange gods are worshiped has shut off the light of heaven and obscured the face of beauty. When men dissociate God's gifts from God who gave them, men lose their way; they wander in the confusion of unbelief, and misapply, or wholly ignore, the suggestions, inspirations, and teachings of the world in which they live.

The Beauty of God has been revealed—

1. In nature: "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament showeth his handiwork. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night showeth knowledge. There is no speech nor language, where their voice is not heard." (Ps. xix. 1--3.) "The invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead." (Rom. i. 20.)

2. In man: "And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness."

(Gen. i. 26.) “Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.” (1 John iii. 2.)

3. In Jesus Christ: “Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father: and how sayeth thou, then, Show us the Father?” (John xiv. 9.) “And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.” (John i. 14.)

The Beauty of God

I

CREATOR AND CREATED

BEAUTY is inherent, stamped in the nature of its possessor. The high coloring of flowers on an animal's back would be out of place; a dog the color of a poppy would be ludicrous. Nursery ditties, suitable for little children in the home, could awaken no sense of the beautiful if sung in a great cathedral, where the soul rises in reverent worship upon the wings of sustained and impassioned song.

Since beauty lies so deep, it is a part of creation and comes from God. Every form of beauty must have found its origin in the mind and heart of God. The artist must conceive his picture, the poet dream his dream, or else there is no picture, no poem. In the arid West large towns flourish, wide valleys yield abundant harvests. The health,

productiveness, and prosperity of these places find their source in adaptation to improvement, and in streams that flow from the heart of the mountains, whose waters are dispensed to the thirsty lands below. Forth from the hand of God has come this earth with all its endowments for utility and beauty. Forth from the heart of God pours that flood that nourishes and sustains the beauty of the world.

The beauties of landscape, of sea, of sky, of color, of form, of fitness, of all thought and imagery, of truth and love, of honor and justice, of mercy and of majesty—all are of God—can be traced to the mind and purpose of God; for he conceived them, fashioned them into being, and, with man's coöperation, guarantees their enlargement and perfection.

Then surely God loves and cherishes the beauty he has made. So much has been said of the wrath of God that many think of him as an irascible tyrant, grasping for their joys, trampling under heavy foot the

garden of their hopes and casting somber clouds across the crystal light of their sky. It is not so. He would be a wanton Deity that created to destroy; like the painter that put the excellence of his genius upon a canvas for the insane pleasure of tearing it into shreds; or like a gardener that tended never so carefully a beautiful flower, that, in a paroxysm of folly, he might grind it under his heel. God is the author of beauty and is displeased when it is marred.

The disposition of young people to beautify themselves is not the sign of a depraved nature. Older people too often reprove the young for their delight in pretty clothes and for their efforts to make themselves look better. A sense of the beautiful is natural and innocent and should be carefully controlled and trained, not obliterated. If the council of some should prevail and they should succeed in destroying in the young the appreciation of good appearances, a fatal blunder would be made, resulting in crude tastes and the loss of self-respect.

Mankind is too often the enemy of God's beauty. The beauty of this earth has suffered much through the carelessness, cupidity, and wanton sport of man. Forests have been removed; streams polluted, choked, and diverted; fishes, birds, and wild things of the woods have been destroyed. The term "man" is used in the generic sense, for woman is not guiltless. Let good taste decide. Which is more beautiful, the burnished wings of a bird in swift flight, flashing in the sunlight, or stretched upon a hideous piece of headgear called the latest style? Which more beautiful, the live bird in the tree, quivering with joy as it sends its rapturous song through wood and field, or the dead bird on the hat which is worn to church, whose voiceless shrunken head, set off by lusterless bead eyes, makes dumb appeal from one's vanity and cruelty, even while one prays?

II

NATURE

WE live in a beautiful world, God's world. Beauty is found in dawn of day when nature wakes refreshed from sleep, and fields adrip with dew flash diamond glints in glory burst of rising sun. A fleckless sky whose air is pure, washed clean by recent rain, and one whose dome of blue holds here and there a group of sunlit heaping cloud forms, alike are beautiful; and so are radiant sunsets with their after-fire glow on sky and cloud and lingering gleam on mountain crest. And beauty may be found freshed in hush of twilight hours when work is done, and quiet falls with gathering shadows; in sound of bird wings, nest-ward bound, cutting in swift flight the growing dusk; in darkness settling deep, concealing and thus giving voice to shy, defenseless creatures, so they may have their say and not be afraid;

in passionate night-winds whose breath is sweet with strangely mingled odors from unknown, fragrant sources, now sighing music notes of sounds from unseen origins, now panting to be away in haste to some mysterious destination.

And so is beauty seen in vales secluded and in lonely lakes; in wandering paths that wind through dales and over hills; in nooks made dark by shade; in clear, cold, gurgling springs; in meadows where the sunshine sometimes falls asleep; in moonlit glens where rabbits play at night; in abrupt turns of roads that show perspective of long, billowing vistas.

Again is beauty seen in undulating fields of wind-swept wheat; in waving fields of corn that spread green banners to the summer breeze; in growing fields and harvests ripe and shocks of golden grain; in autumn woods where dead leaves drift in heaps and lie piled up in corners of rail fences old, where squirrels frisk in haste to lay in store the nuts and acorns frost and wind

have scattered on the ground; in silhouette of bare-limbed trees against the tinted glow of winter's evening sky; in warmth and cheer of blazing hearth, while gales blow cold from ice fields far and nature sleeps beneath a covering of snow.

Sublimely beautiful are great forest boundaries, which stand in solitude and silence and muse upon the mysteries of the ages; or murmur cadences of age-long memories when gentle breezes blow; or roar resistance to the stress of equinoctial storms; or wail loud terror cries when hurricanes rend with brutal might. Magnificently beautiful are mighty ocean waves that rush against rock-breasted coasts and foam, as if with rage, because they cannot beat all barriers down; that surge with threatening mien upon defenseless beaches, then change their minds and lie down quiet on the sands. What strange unworded messages sea winds suggest! What calls there come from over trackless main to put to sea and "sail beyond the paths of all the Western stars"!

A solemn beauty reigns in desert lone and vast and wild, by awful stillness thrall'd, by barren desolation whelmed. Lakes and trees and things that live appear at times upon the arid waste, then vanish, leaving still the destitution of its long sand stretches. At sunset hour resplendent spectrum hues are weaved in shrouds of pastel colors and spread in reverent pity o'er the desert's somber death. The lonely mystery of those weird, untraversed reaches casts a spell of pleasing fascination; and the wind-swept, sun-baked, wide immensity urges to infinite realms of idealization.

The majesty of beauty is seen in rugged mountain ranges. Huge sapphire gems they seem to be, blue gleaming in pellucid atmosphere, whose ponderous links are bound in decoration on the heaving breast of mother earth. Again aurora hues appear upon their lifted heights and make them look like massive thrones of power adorned in opalescent glory. Lest we forget their right to rule earth's scenic grandeur, rich robes of

royal purple oftentimes hang upon their rugged shoulders, and peaks upraised shine clean and white in blazing sun, nor yield their crystal crowns of snow to summer's heat.

Yes, God's beauty may be found in nature everywhere: in sounds and scenes and season's change; in rain and mist and driving storm; in shining day and deep, clear skies; in flowers and birds and brooks and trees; in rolling floods and mighty seas; in stars and suns and infinite spaces.

NATURE INTERPRETS

This earth, with its innumerable scenic effects, with its forces of land and sea and sky, interprets the unformulated feelings and desires of the human heart. Nature parallels man, descending to the profoundest depths of the most pungent grief or rising to the most exalted heights of ecstasy. Through placid days of prosperity and through troubled deeps of adversity, along the pathway of childhood to old age, nature's moods

are as variant as those of the human soul. Her balance of light and shade, her storm-pent cloud to-day, and her crystalline sky to-morrow, her balm-laden breeze just now, and then her tempest wind with lightning shock—all these emblemize the heart of man with its joy and its sorrow, its peace and its struggle. Tennyson found it so when he wrote:

“Break, break, break,
On thy cold grey stones, O Sea!
And I would that my tongue could utter
The thoughts that arise in me.

O well for the fisherman’s boy,
That he shouts with his sister at play!
O well for the sailor lad,
That he sings in his boat on the bay!

And the stately ships go on
To their haven under the hill;
But O for the touch of a vanished hand,
And the sound of a voice that is still!

Break, break, break,
At the foot of thy crags, O Sea!
But the tender grace of a day that is dead
Will never come back to me.”

Nature interprets life both by contrast and by similarity. The sound of beating

sleet and rush of winter winds at night but emphasize the comforts of a well-built home where light and warmth and genial company abound. And then again the night wind, crying round the eaves and sighing through the trees, gives voice to grief and mourns in sympathy with the broken-hearted.

The sea, upheaved by tempest wind and breaking on the barriers of the coast, declares that earth's foundations are secure; and also says in symbol language that truth will stand though lashed by error's fiercest opposition. The deep-voiced sea repeats within its rocky caves the groans of hapless ships by storm beset, moaning dirges sad for those gone down, and shouting hoarse and mighty songs of victory for those that would not yield. Both eulogies for sailors brave, who fought the winds and waves in vain and lost, and loud acclaims of praise for those who fought and won, are spoken by the sounding waves that break upon the ocean's wild and lonely boundaries.

The boom of thunderstorms and roar of devastating floods and shriek of ripping hurricanes not only symbolize but put in act and speech the tragic drama of a human life; while days of calm, with chastened light and songs of birds and bloom of fragrant flowers, affirm the blessedness of those whose hearts are pure and are at peace with man and God.

NATURE INSPIRES

The beauty of the Lord in nature is an inspiration. Stand upon the bank of some great river and feel the stress of its flood move in your soul an infinite desire for endeavor and achievement. Catch the song of morning birds from hedgerow and leafy covert and renew your youth, and make your heart innocent again like that of a little child. Lift your eyes to the light of some far-off star coming through trackless spaces of the wide night heavens to your window and to you, and it will suggest that your integrity should be as constant and inviolable.

Nature's persistence in completing her purpose of growth and development gives an object lesson that should inspire determination in those who contend with adverse conditions in reaching the ideal of life. Through frost and heat and drought and flood and accident and unfavorable circumstances, she struggles on and reaches the goal. Her persistent courage is contagious. Nature bears scars as well as man. She suffers silently but continues her pursuit of the end to be attained and at last arrives. Human experience takes place upon a field of conquest over whose battle ground surge the opposing forces of life and death. The causes involved cannot be compromised, the issues presented cannot be evaded, the results obtained cannot be ignored, the ideal to be realized cannot be abandoned. It's a fight to the finish, a battle to the death. Nature never waves a flag of truce, never holds a parley, never makes a compromise. Nature fights and wins, and so may we.

NATURE ENCOURAGES WORSHIP

The beauty of nature leads to worship. Walk amid the deep woods at night, breathe their atmosphere of balm, and watch the wind push back reluctant branches of the trees to let the moonlight in to chase away the shadows—and not only will your tired mind and body be at rest, but you will be inclined to pray. Far from the clatter of business strife and the gabble of folly pleasure bent, made cool by fragrant winds and awed by sacred silence, one's heart ascends to Him who dwells beyond the stars. And as one prays, His peace that passeth understanding comes down upon the soul, and love doth touch the place and mix its perfume with the perfume of the flowers, and change the dewdrops on their leaves to tears of joy. A song bird resting in some dark tree top close by, awakened by the tossing of the restless wind, breaks forth in rich, clear strains of purest melody; and when the song has ceased and all is still again, the music of one's childhood days

comes floating in upon the soul like voices from some far-off shore. Old evening hymns are heard once more, and lullabies that soothed the spirit of a child grown tired of play, content to quit his stormy little sea of strife and find at last love's haven in his mother's bosom. What waves of peace roll o'er the lonely strand of manhood days when one recalls the memories of the hallowed past! What songs, triumphant o'er the tumult of the day, the forest sings at night! What pure ambitions and what holy thoughts the quiet depths of woods awake!

The dim perspective of far-reaching mountain ranges, outlined against the sky at dawn, reminds of spheres above the commonplace; while hurtling crags, deep-cut by untrod gorges and draped with early morning clouds, suggest inviolate sanctuaries to which the soul may rise and find communion with its God. And when the atmosphere is clear and sunlight floods the whole, those massive piles appear so close at hand that

one may feel the nearness and the majesty of Him who gave them substance and raised their mighty forms. And when at night the moon spreads silver sheen upon the snow-clad summits of the range, the one who contemplates the scene and prays will get the vision of another realm, a realm beyond the mountain heights, unsoiled by sin and bathed in light from God's exceeding glory.

III

MANIFOLD BEAUTY OF HUMAN LIFE

THE beauty of God in human life transcends, by far, that in what is generally denominated nature. A beautiful woman is more fair to look upon than a flower or a landscape. A handsome man is more majestic than a tree or a mountain; for human beauty is invested with a threefold character: mental and spiritual, as well as physical. Without these in combination there can be no perfection of human beauty. It is well to remember that there is a subtle connection between these three features of human beauty—physical, mental, and spiritual. The higher invariably affects the lower.

In an intelligent creature, capable of moral distinctions, there can be no permanent charm without intellectual and moral excellence. The most perfect feature, the

most graceful form, the most delicate tint of color in the complexion, without genuine goodness of heart, are even offensive instead of pleasing. The fascination that is felt under the spell of physical charms devoid of morality is born of lust, and is far removed from a sense of the beautiful. The possessor of moral and intellectual attractions may, if need be, dispense with the physical and sustain no great loss. Good fruit does not always come from good-looking trees, nor do trees that look well always yield good fruit. The purpose of the fruit tree is good fruit, sound and of fine flavor. The purpose of human life is more than show; it is intelligence, honor, truth, and love—character.

To think that goodness and beauty are not related, that there is an antagonism rather than an affinity between the two, is gross error. "Poor thing! She is not pretty, but she is good." Foolish one that believes such a statement. A good person cannot be ugly, a bad person cannot be beautiful. Did you ever see a beautiful snake? Whatever

may be its sinuous grace and variety of coloring, it is repulsive and repulsive only.

So great has been the delusion regarding physical charms, as independent of mind and heart, that many of our young people who might have been the proud possessors of this threefold beauty, trusting their all to the physical and neglecting the intellect and the soul, have become useless and grievous members of the home, and have made of themselves simpering idiots in society. Girls who tog themselves up in a variety and profusion of dress (the profusion often lacking), having neither ideals nor noble impulses, forthwith become dummies for showing clothes. The only difference between them and dummies in the show window is that they can walk and chatter. Between the two, the silent, motionless dummies are preferable. Faces can be improved, but rather by anointing the heart than by lotions on the skin. Heads may be made to look better, but rather by ideas within than by the arts and ornaments of the hairdresser without.

BODY

However, beauty of face and physique are not to be despised. Good features and a pleasing personality are valuable assets in the work of life. One who is unprepossessing in personal appearance sustains a handicap, at least on first acquaintance. This handicap is in time overcome when the mind and heart are right. But good looks make a favorable impression when one is being introduced. A wry face and an ill-formed body are nothing to boast of. The expression is sometimes heard, "He is so ugly that he is attractive." That is merely the attraction of a curio. No one should aspire to be a curio. Whatever can be done to improve the face and figure is legitimate, provided the effort is not carried to excess. Time and effort in that direction should be limited, for physical attractions are secondary.

Health should be no hindrance to piety. It is really essential in accomplishing life's worthy purposes. A few, just a few, sick

people have been successful. Accepted as a gracious provision of Heaven for happiness and success, health becomes an occasion for thanksgiving and is used for the good of humanity and the glory of God. When the muscles tense and flex in response to the challenge of physical exercise; when the blood rushes along its appointed channels with unimpeded progress; when the nerves vibrate with zest in answer to all pleasing sensations, and are never agitated by those that are not pleasing; when food is relished and the processes of digestion and assimilation are unconsciously performed; when sleep is untroubled and one awakes refreshed and invigorated; when great tasks are presented, and the body is prepared to answer "Ready"—then physical beauty is at its best, and will be worth something to the possessor thereof.

MIND

The light of intelligence is necessary to good looks. In fact, whatever is in the mind comes to the surface of the countenance

for expression. Eyes and mouth and lineaments, all the features, merely transmit what is back of the face. If there is intelligence there, something interesting will be coming out in the expression. If there is no intelligence, the face will show a blank, for there is nothing else to show. Again, our features are windows through which others look into our house. A vacant room, though viewed through a well washed window, is not interesting; there is nothing to engage interest. What though our eyes be bright, if others looking through them see nothing but emptiness back of them?

• Lay hold on truth. Furnish the inside of this room of the mind with useful pieces of knowledge and information. Kindle a bright enthusiasm on the hearthstone of the heart; transfer rows of books from the library to the convolutions of the brain; have comfortable seats of meditation there; set up a workroom adjoining, where sinews of thought are knit together, where cables of power are wrought from knowledge and purpose and

high ideal; have the cabinet of memory sitting close by, filled with material; let reason pass on all that is done; have the balances of judgment in order; make the ceiling high, so that imagination can take a flight now and then; put the police badge upon the will, so that order may be observed and every faculty kept at work. When the gates of the mind, which are found in the front part of the head, are opened, something pleasing will be seen by others, and that which is within will come out and adorn the possessor with genuine beauty.

Two young men were sitting on a bench in the park. They were well dressed, but their general demeanor betrayed the fact that they were strangers to the real meaning of existence. Evidently exhausted with the foolish rounds of their social swirl, they had sought the quiet and cool of the park to refresh their jaded systems. With careless abandon, one fixed his vacant gaze upon the ground and seemed lost in reverie. The other, noticing the abstraction of his com-

panion, turned to him with agitated concern and said, "Bill, stop thinking; you make me nervous." Long since had he, the speaker, stopped thinking, and it made him nervous to see anyone else apparently engaged in that laborious and painful exercise.

Entertainment and excitement are sought until the overwrought interest is surfeited, and in its place comes irritability in the presence of the common responsibilities of life. Instead of the normal relish that one should feel in the performance of duty and in the enjoyment of recreation, nerve disorders, often amounting to hysteria, take possession of the unfortunate being. The reading of good literature and sober thought make a fine antidote to this frenzy.

All endowments of the Creator are given for development. The flower can be made more fragrant and beautiful by care and cultivation; the tree more symmetrical by pruning and culture; the animal better looking by selective propagation and feeding.

It is so with the mind. It takes work to have an attractive mind. The process of mental development is tedious and laborious. A trained mind justifies the time and labor necessary to produce it. And the products of this trained mind justify all the activities necessary to accomplish its worthy ends. The sculptor emerges from amidst the dust and plaster and bits of broken stone and strips of metal that clutter up the place in which he works. From out therefrom he brings the statue of some hero of the past or present whose courage, sacrifice, and strength are shaped in every lineament of the face and figure he has made. The statue is placed in some hall of fame that the greatness of the past may not be forgotten nor the present lose its inspiration.

This plastic endowment of mind, which is the gift of God, may be so perfected that it will elicit the admiration of all who behold its pleasing and powerful movements; and, while unfolding to others the intricate and wonderful mysteries of truth, will bring to

the possessor thereof the supreme rapture which Kepler must have felt when, in his scientific discoveries, he exclaimed, "O God! I think Thy thoughts after Thee."

Having a trained mind, apply it wisely. Its beauty may be marred, even destroyed, by its application to unlovely objects. Heed the advice of one who possessed one of the biggest, best trained minds this world has ever known. "Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things." (St. Paul.)

MORALS

But personal beauty requires more than a healthy body and a well-trained mind. Moral adornments are requisite. These are elements of character that come from rigid discipline and arduous effort in contact with conditions that often seem adverse to the

objective to be attained. Yet these conditions, if properly used, used with courage and untiring zeal, afford the needful exercise and yield the nutrition necessary to moral worth. All about us, around us, above us, and beneath us are the forces that try us and at the same time nourish us. The ooze at the roots of the lily is black, but the flower is perfect in its glistening whiteness. The odor of the muck beneath the plant is not sweet, but the breath from the lily's mouth is perfume. The beauty and sweetness of the lily come from beneath as well as from above.

Many admire the beauty of moral character though they have it not. They are unwilling that its process of growth and development take place in them. Self-denial seems hard, sacrifice looks to be loss, the discipline of moral stamina appears to be rigid and severe. Moral courage involves the possible danger of social censure, humility means humiliation, and to be independent in opinion and conduct is to be uncon-

ventional. And are they right? Their mistake is that they are looking at the process and not considering the ultimate product. The roots of the oak grovel in the dirt and grip the hard rocks which they encounter. The branches fight the winds, the buds encounter the frosts; while the bark stiffens itself against the biting cold, and the body of the tree writhes under the twisting torture of the storm. But from the ground beneath and from the air above the oak gathers sustenance for its strength and beauty.

Moral weaklings keep to the cover of custom, and to the established usages and accepted standards of the majority. Patience, in their case, indeed ceases to be a virtue and becomes exasperation. Faith is either a mere assent to the claims of religion, or an evasive myth that has no practical value. Hope is nothing more than a sentimental longing for something better, without much expectation of reward. Love is a kind of self-infatuation that desires not to minister,

but to be ministered unto. They have no beauty of character. Their virtues are plucked flowers, pinned on, that soon wither.

RELIGION

But even moral excellence does not complete the beauty of character. The Christian religion brings into character a charm that cannot be attained by self-discipline alone. Religion makes it possible to draw from a source beyond the limit of unaided mortal reach—God. The strength of morality comes from one's unyielding conflict with vice. This conquest cannot end in complete victory unless our weapons are "mighty through God." The field is never cleared entirely of the enemy without the presence of the Captain of our salvation on the battle ground. Morality is man alone; Christianity is man and God together. Morality at its best is but feeble in its pursuit of virtue. Christianity not only vanquishes vice, but also makes virtue gloriously possible.

St. Paul mentions three fundamental vir-

tues of Christian character: faith, hope, and love. Let us consider these in the order named, remembering that no virtue is an abstract quality to be considered apart from a personal intelligence, having a conscience and a will, and related to other personal intelligences and the Supreme Being.

Faith is one and the same in all of its exercises. There is not one kind of faith regarding material substance, another kind with respect to people, and still another as applied to God. It is the same faculty directed to different objects and differs only as its object differs. The object to which faith is applied determines the character of the one exercising the faith. Men may put their faith in money until the lines about their mouths remind one of the puckerings made by the drawstrings of a money bag, and their hearts get hard like silver dollars. A man may put his faith in cattle, raise cattle, buy and sell cattle, think cattle, until his face resembles that of a steer and his

manners become as rude. A merchant may put his faith in merchandise, to the exclusion of everything else, and get to himself a countenance as blank as a bolt of cloth, or as dull as a piece of cheese. One may believe in one's own self-importance till one shows the strut and bluster of a well-known, lordly, barnyard fowl, whose glory ends in a Thanksgiving feast. One may cultivate the earth, never looking up and afar, until, at the last, it will be said of him, "of the earth, earthy." A man may subscribe to the appeal of sensuality as the chief satisfaction of life, until the fiber of his moral being becomes sodden like the flesh of a body that is dead.

When one puts faith in Christ, one becomes Christlike in spirit, in manner, and in appearance. His tenderness and compassion will abide in the heart and beam in the face. The light of His refinement will illumine the soul and rest upon the brow. His courage will flash in the eyes and banish fear from the heart. Troubles that perturbed rest and disconcerted every task

shall disappear. Misgivings, anxieties, and forebodings shall cease. The aim of life will be directed with accurate precision and all opposition laid low. One's integrity will be established and one's mission discerned. To such an one will come the majesty of Him who overcame and put all enemies under his feet.

Faith is not altogether an intellectual exercise. Hypotheses are accepted by the intellect for purposes of demonstration; but if reason does not arrive at a sound conclusion, the hypotheses are rejected. The process of faith is not a demonstration. The predominant characteristic of faith is trust. Our confidences are not won through abstract demonstrations. A child whose intellect is largely dormant, at least undeveloped, can exercise faith. What is more beautiful than the simplicity and confidence of a little child's trust or faith? Let not our learning and wisdom take from us that spirit of trustfulness shown by those little ones who were glad to get into the

arms of Jesus, and feel against their little breasts the heartbeat of the Son of God.

It is in the experiences of life that reach the heart where faith is tried and from which faith comes forth wrecked or made strong. The most devastating doubts do not arise from the intellectual problems of religion; but rather from those ordeals that wound our affections and leave destitution where once joy abounded. The supreme test of Abraham's faith was the sacrifice of his son. Rebellion is prone to rise when it seems that the heart is being rifled of its treasure. Only then can faith sustain and keep the staggering soul from despair. And if, like Abraham, we meet the test, we find that we still have our heart's treasure, and the promise of God is fulfilled. Faith in God oftentimes leads through purging fire, but the soul comes forth from the ordeal one hundred per cent pure, refined, beautified.

Do not say you have no faith. Faith is an element of the human soul. In chemistry,

the last analysis of a substance separates it into its constituent elements. Thus reduced, if one of the elements is eliminated and those remaining are recombined, a different substance than the first is the result. Reduce, if possible, the soul into its constituent elements; eliminate, if possible, the element of faith and recombine. A human soul would not be the result of this new combination. Faith cannot be eliminated. An object must be found and will be found upon which faith may be exercised. This application of one's faith determines whether its exercise will mar or beautify. Then, have faith in God. God's beauty will be manifest in those who put their faith in him.

Hope is not altogether a sentiment. Hope as portrayed in the picture of the three Graces, all feminine, that we used to admire is not altogether true; and, for that reason no doubt, the picture has ceased to attract attention. Hope is limited to no specific gender. It is an element in both

sexes alike, but its predominating quality is masculine rather than feminine.

Hope has sentiment to be sure, but sentiment is hope's embellishment; the heart of hope is fire and its arms are steel. Hope is exemplified not by a wistful maiden, but by a strong man who laughs at seeming impossibilities, and who girds himself for stupendous tasks. Hope awakens us at night, pushes together the charred ends of lost endeavor, kindles anew the dying embers of ambition into hot flame, pierces the veil of the future with its glorious light of anticipation, sends the live steam of passion through all the conduits of the will, and cries, "It shall be done."

Hope is the mighty impulse that fires the will and makes it like unto a big engine drawing a train of cars, which sends its tug of strength back to the last dragging dead weight of unrealized desire, and pulls it on over plain and mountain crest, through cloud and shine, through beating storm and placid calm, to the far-off goal of achieve-

ment. Hope forms the ideal, sets it up in the far-away days that are to be, and, with dauntless confidence, urges body, mind, and soul to its attainment. Hope, with volition as the motor, is the aëroplane that lifts the soul from the sordid grounds of selfish interest and, with the speed and power of multiplied storm winds, rises above the limitations and obstructions of time and sense, overtops the mountain ranges of obstacle, difficulty, and impossibility, receives God's wireless call from the landing field of the soul's destiny, and sends ahead the answering signal, "Coming."

We cannot do without the stimulus and sustenance of hope. The farmer is encouraged by hope from seeding time to harvest. Though discouragements may be numerous, and disaster seem inevitable, the man of business does not give up; for has not hope said to him, "You can"? The housewife, in the monotonous round of the same duties each day, finds the monotony all gone when hope pictures her household in comfort and

her children established in honorable manhood and womanhood. The clerk, the office man, and those who perform the same tasks daily do not find this performance a treadmill, but a highway with ever-changing interest; because hope is telling them all the while of the good things the wage will get, and how valuable their service to the progress of the world's work. The traveler faints not, nor grows tired, as he climbs the mountain, so be it home lies beyond. The sailor recks not of wind and wave, for by them and through them and over them and beyond them he sees through hope the anchor cast and love awaiting his return.

The moil and toil of life's pilgrimage, its stretches of climb and its intervening expanse of opposition, become invested with concern, and even with relish, when hope gives full assurance of the reward. The discipline of self ceases to be tedious and heart-breaking when hope lifts up the ideal of purity and strength and declares it shall be attained. Strenuous service for the

betterment of others, for the elimination of wrong, and for the supremacy of righteousness becomes a privilege rather than a duty, when hope gives the vision of Christ's reign on earth and his kingdom established in the heart of mankind. We are saved by hope; saved from lethargy, from inefficiency, from cowardice, from despair. Fear is the antithesis of hope. Perfect love casteth out fear and hope takes its own appointed place.

Faith and hope work together. When the stolid indifference to spiritual ideals is encountered in the hosts dominated by materialism; when the vulgar force of money power, estimating values in dollars rather than in character, sways the multitude, and those who have not wealth cringe with fear before the overbearing devotees of mammon; when custom, however foolish or corrupt, becomes the rule of conduct; when propriety is disregarded, and fashion, however indecent, is made the monitor of dress; when moral conviction and sound principle, as

grounds of choice, are abandoned for those of policy, expediency, and personal gain; when so many love darkness rather than light — then it is that faith and hope save.

Have both faith and hope in the power of God who still rules; in his patience and goodness that will not abandon the race which he has created; in his prevailing love that will break the hardened human heart; in the Spirit's ability to reveal the wretchedness of sin and the beauty of holiness; in the Gospel of Christ to awaken in man his dormant preference of good to evil; in the ability of Spirit-filled men and women to lead their fellows from bondage to freedom; in the power of the Holy Ghost to fully cleanse the heart from sin and flood the soul with light and life—then will the social, civic, and religious conditions of the present day cease to cause dismay, but will arouse the noblest and holiest activities of which we are capable. In the exercise of these activities there will appear in us the beauty and excellence of true worth; and in those

for whom we labor there will be revealed the majesty and glory of righteousness.

Love cannot be defined. It must be exemplified—yea, experienced—to be understood. One must be the possessor of love, the giver of love, and the recipient of love to know its full meaning. Love softens and at the same time strengthens. Love is all tenderness, yet subscribes unflinchingly to the most extreme sacrifices. Love is the greatest motive force in the world; not ambition, nor greed of gain, nor desire for power, but love. Throttle love and the whole fabric of society would go to pieces. Stronger than mammon is love. Hotter than furnace fires for driving intricate and powerful machinery is the flame of love upon the altar of the human heart; for it puts in motion human agencies that nothing else can move and utilizes power from the throne of God. The paid nurse is faithful and efficient, but she must have rest. The mother nurse, though frail, attends her

sick child beyond all expectation of endurance. Her love sustains her. God is love, and love for that reason is very strong and very beautiful.

Love creates an atmosphere. When the writer was a lad living four miles in the country from town, it was arranged one fall that he should go to the school in town and board and return home each Friday afternoon. The plan suited the boy, only that part of it of returning home for each week-end was not attractive; there were chores to be done. The first part of the week at school was pleasing, but by Friday the schoolboy was homesick. It had been arranged that an older brother should come with the means of transportation home. The brother was there by the time school was out, but must attend to some business for an hour or more before starting. There was an urgent pull across the hills toward home upon the heart of the lad, and a ready response in his legs. He decided to walk, and get there by the time his brother was pre-

pared to start from town. Though the autumn sun was slipping down behind the western hills and long, indistinct shadows were stretching out across the landscape through the "Indian summer" haze, somehow things began to brighten as home was neared. Coming at last to the hilltop overlooking the home place, a mellow welcome floated up from the cow bells in the valley below. Passing in the back way, the milch cows standing at the lot gate seemed to have missed the absent one and rolled their wondering eyes around as if saying, "Well, you've gotten back." And the guinea fowls over in the fence corner were actually saying it, "Got back! Got back! Got back!" The yard gate always had a peculiar squeak never before interpreted. This time, as it was opened, it whined plainly and cheerfully, "Howdy do-oo." Walking into mother's room, she was found sitting by the open fireplace. The glad surprise in her dear face and the tender embrace of her arms explained it all: Love was

there. And the beauty of that love had pervaded the landscape and the autumn haze and all the surroundings of that humble dwelling place.

Years passed, many years. The one-time lad returned to the old homestead to revive the memories of bygone days. Father and mother had long since moved away, far away, to the "house not made with hands." Brothers and sisters were gone. The place was in the possession of strangers. The house was still standing, the same as in former years. But there was a change, the change one notes in a friend who has become indifferent. The attendant features of boyhood days were there: cattle, fields, trees. Yes, all the trees were in their proper places. But there was no welcome. Even the elm tree, where he used to skin the cat, did not seem to remember him; and the old oak, upon whose big low-branching limb he used to sit and play with his pet squirrel, had quite forgotten him and seemed to say, "Who are you and what are you doing

here?" The light had lost its softness, the hills their haze of dreams. The only sound, distinct, was the cry of a flock of wild geese high up in the sky, winging their long flight to a more genial clime for the winter in the far south. Waving their grey wings in a last farewell, the whole flock glimmered to a speck in the pallid distance and was finally lost to sight. And then, almost inaudibly, the autumn wind through the bare limbs of the trees began to sing a strange, weird song. Was it bidding a sad good-by to the summer that had passed, or yielding a reluctant greeting to the winter coming from afar? Mayhap both. But to the lonely wayfarer, who lingered still amid the surroundings of the place no longer home, the autumn wind, through the bare limbs of the trees, was sighing low a requiem: Love was gone.

That pervasive atmosphere which invests a dwelling place with such pleasing attraction and makes it home is surely none other than that of love. Home is the name for

a host of beautiful virtues in combination. Home means rest, refreshment, refuge; comfort, care, and confidence; honor, hope, and happiness; sacrifice, sweetness, and strength; duty and contentment; labor and light and life and love. Home is a box of precious gems wherein are found all the priceless jewels of the human heart. It contains the rich treasures of earth and heaven. It commingles in its sacred keep the delicate perfumes of the human soul and of the Divine Being; and the incense rising from love's altar in a Christian home must surely regale the sense of angels and of God. There is no beauty like it. It is the Creator's masterpiece.

Tennyson has given in a familiar lullaby a suggestion intense of the beauty of home:

“Sweet and low, sweet and low,
Wind of the western sea,
Low, low, breathe and blow,
Wind of the western sea!

Over the rolling waters go,
Come from the dying moon, and blow,
Blow him again to me
While my little one, while my pretty one, sleeps.

Sleep and rest, sleep and rest,
 Father will come to thee soon;
Rest, rest, on mother's breast,
 Father will come to thee soon;
Father will come to his babe in the nest,
Silver sails all out of the west
 Under the silver moon:
Sleep, my little one, sleep, my pretty one, sleep."

Baby hands that tangle these heart strings into a maze of happy delight; baby mouths that prattle love's purest and simplest speech; baby fingers that unlock all doors; baby feet that go pattering through all the neglected chambers of the heart's house and make the one-time silent spaces of the soul ring with love's joy and triumph—these are just beauties that baby has brought us from the skies. Father's labor and protection, mother's care and sacrifice, children's obedience and appreciation, brother's devotion, sister's affection—all these establish those relations most beautiful in life and strongest in death. Not in the world of foolish devices for entertainment where too often many forget that which is sacred, but in the Christian home, the sanctuary of love,

will be found that element of being that makes one indeed beautiful.

Love is a guarantee. It has been said that an honest man's word is as good as his bond. But the word of one who loves sincerely and sanely is better than any bond that can be obtained; for it carries with it not only material values, but also those of personal interest, of time, of service, and of moral and spiritual support. In that most sacred relationship of life where two individual destinies are merged into one, vows are given, but only such vows as love can give and keep. And those vows will come short of fulfillment, unless love be the author of them. Wedlock without love is a very difficult and dangerous undertaking, certain to bring unrest and unhappiness.

When Jesus was ready to commit the establishment of his kingdom on earth to the men that he had selected and trained for his work, he was very careful about one thing. Did he enunciate a creed and have them all subscribe to it? Did he formulate an oath

of allegiance and fidelity and swear them one by one? None of these. He asked a simple, searching question, addressed to Peter, the leader of the band, whose conduct during the trial gave emphasis to the import and meaning of the question: "Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me?" Three times this question was asked; and having received an affirmative answer each time, and knowing that Peter and the rest understood what it meant and really loved him, he was satisfied.

Assured of the fact of the love of these men, Christ committed to them, without reserve, all that he had come to this earth to do, all that he had lived for here, all that he had suffered for, all that he had died for, all that he had accomplished by his resurrection and ascension. He gave to them the biggest, hardest, most glorious task of the ages and was sure that they would perform it because they loved him. Yes, love is the best guarantee in all the universe.

SPIRIT

It must be remembered that faith, hope, and love are, first of all, on the human side, merely capacities for exercise which bring an experience peculiar to their exercise. They begin with certain well-defined courses of action which result in certain states of being. If these capacities, which are endowments of the Creator, are not directed to the highest objects, the highest benefits will not be realized. In the Bible, faith, hope, and love are treated as applied to God and to those things well-pleasing to his will. So directed, they become the highest virtues and adorn the one who uses them in this way with the incomparable character of Deity.

There is still a higher attainment of these virtues, which, though requiring man's effort, comes entirely from without man and from above him. It comes direct from God. The love proclaimed by St. Paul in the thirteenth chapter of his first letter to the Corinthians is none other than the love

which is found in the heart of God, made possible to a human heart by the ministry of the Holy Spirit: "Love suffereth long, and is kind; love envieth not; love vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil, rejoiceth in the truth; beareth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. Love never faileth." Beautiful!

This ideal of love is so high that one, contemplating its perfection in contrast with human frailty and imperfection, is likely to become utterly discouraged. Surely such excellence of love herein set forth by the word of divine revelation can never be attained by man, beset by so much infirmity of the flesh. But this word of divine revelation tells also from whence this love comes and how it is obtained: "God is love"; "The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost"; "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heaven-

ly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?"

If the necessary conditions for obtaining the Holy Spirit are met, there is nothing that can prevent him from coming into one's heart. Renunciation of every sin, absolute surrender to the will of God, earnest and continuous entreaty in prayer, unwavering trust in God's promise, and a gracious acceptance of His gift—these are the requirements to be fulfilled in order that body, mind, and soul may be invested by the Holy Spirit. It is through the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit that one becomes possessed of this beautiful love of which St. Paul writes. And the possession of this love is the crowning glory of character.

Some understanding of the love of God may be obtained by contemplating the wonder, adaptation, and fitness of his creation. His love extends to the remotest bounds of his creation; for wherever the power of God is manifested his love appears. This love

is found in the beauty and fragrance of flowers, in the clear, pure notes of birds, in scenic loveliness of pleasing landscapes, and in all the thrilling spectacles of nature's grander forms and more powerful movements; in all the beneficent forces of earth and sea and sky; in little children with trustful innocence, with their laughter, tears, and shouts of joy; in the freshness and buoyancy of youth, in its wild enthusiasms and daring hopes; in the sturdy strength and courage of manhood; in the achievements of his industry, commerce, invention, science, philosophy, art, oratory, and statesmanship; in the sacrifice, tenderness, heroism, and fidelity of womanhood; in the wisdom, counsel, and patience of old age.

But the love of God cannot be realized by contemplating his creation — mankind, of course, included. Creation is the work of love, not love itself. It is as if we looked upon the estate of some great landlord and were entranced with the wisdom, skill, and taste that had so wisely planned and so

wonderfully executed, while having no personal acquaintance with the owner. God's love can never be communicated to the heart of man by views of nature, nor by analyzing the mind of man, however wonderful its endowments and achievements. To know God's love we must know him personally and so intimately that his love may flow into our hearts. This can be accomplished only by the Holy Spirit. The beauty of holiness is the beauty of perfect love, and the beauty of perfect love is the beauty of God; and this beauty of God is possible to the one who qualifies for its reception by obedience, prayer, and faith.

A prolonged drought befell the cattle ranges of one of our Southwestern States. It continued for months, and, with the exception of a few light showers, extended into years. The pasture lands became brown, in some places barren. The grass, where there was any, when trod upon broke loose and whirled away like chaff before the hot breath of the wind. The streams

stopped running and stood in pools, and these finally became mudholes. The poor cattle would drag themselves through the mire in vain attempts to get a drink. They would then come forth and stand upon the banks, their lank sides almost touching in the midst, their swollen and blackened tongues protruding, their appealing eyes lifted to the brazen heavens, and would utter one of the most piteous sounds ever heard, the cry of a brute dying for want of water. The ranchmen had been deceived time and again by uncertain indications of rain and had waited too long. But they were now rounding up their herds, and were driving them to distant places where water and grass could be found.

One afternoon a very unusual thing occurred, something unknown since the drought began: a strong, steady, northeast wind sprang up. The older cattlemen said: "If this wind continues for twenty-four hours, we will get plenty of rain." Night came. The ranchers slept but little, listen-

ing, fearing, praying lest the swish of the northeast wind as it cut the corners of the cabins could be heard no longer. Now and then one would go outside and, peering into the darkness, would call back: "Fine, boys! No stars! Guess the clouds are still going over." Morning came. The wind continued blowing and the clouds kept going over. There was a freshness in the atmosphere, the smell of moisture.

Late in the afternoon, more than the required time, there was a lull in the wind, an ominous lull. To the southwest was heard an indistinct rumbling as of distant thunder. As darkness fell, the play of lightning gleams could be seen upon the face of the gathering storm. The wind had circled and was coming back, heaving on strong pinions great banks of clouds. It broke upon the captive, drought-bound region with wild cries of deliverance. Then flashed the vivid, jagged streaks. Then jarred the heavy thunder blasts. Fierce lightning shafts ripped the cloud hosts with blades of fire. Raging

thunderbolts fell upon the riven masses and shook them terribly, shook them until they let go their long-coveted treasure.

And it came. Rain! Abundant, life-giving rain! The artillery of the heavens sped on with the advance line of the rain-storm. Its bursts of blaze finally became a sheen now and then, later on an occasional glimmer, and at last went out in darkness. The reverberating tones of its roll became less loud, then muffled, then silent. But still it rained. All night long, softly, musically, joyously, the rain could be heard upon the roofs of the ranch cabins. The thirsty land drank until it was satisfied, then gave to the streams, and these in turn bore the life-giving flood to the depleted rivers far removed. The grass sprang up within a day. All the frogs (where had they been?) shouted with glee. The little birds came back, and chirped and twittered their gladness as they darted through the cooled and purified atmosphere. The cattle expressed their great joy and gratitude by a constant

and generous appropriation of the grass and water now so abundant. Man and beast rejoiced together. The rain had removed the desolation of drought and brought the fullness of physical life.

The coming of rain upon the drought-stricken land does not illustrate in detail the coming of the Holy Spirit upon the desolate human heart. It may, at least, suggest its need and, in some measure, portray its effect. There is this difference: nature knows her need and cries out for relief; man is subject to the delusions of sin, may not realize his distress, and may thus make no appeal for deliverance. But nature can only call for help with no assurance of answer, for her call is often to a sky as destitute as herself. Not so with man. Let him realize his barrenness and death and call for relief and God will answer with fullness of refreshment and life.

Along the horizon where the finite and the infinite meet are heaped cloud stores of grace awaiting the cry of the needy soul.

Call. Though the answer may be as tongues of flame and sound of rushing mighty wind, that which was needed shall be received: cleansing, refreshment, sustenance. Though one be born of the Spirit, the things of the Spirit cannot live and grow in one unless the Spirit come in due season to keep clean, revive, and make grow. Whether the Holy Spirit come in seeming turbulence as that of drenching storm, or in gentle quietude like saturating mist from cloud-robed dawns, His presence brings refreshment and the restoration of life.

“One thing we can know about this filling of man by God, this communication of the Holy Spirit, that it is natural and not unnatural, that it is the restoral of communication, that it is a reënthronement of God where he belongs, that the prayer which invokes the Holy Ghost is the breaking down of an artificial barrier, and the letting in of the flood of divine life to flow where it belongs, in channels that were made for it. If we know this, then the occupation of

man's life by God is simply a final fact. It is like the occupation of the body by the soul. No man can tell how it is; but that it is, is testified by every form of strength and beauty in which our eyes delight." (Phillips Brooks.)

IV

JESUS CHRIST

THE beauty of God is seen most perfectly in Jesus Christ. Possessing a perfect human body, mind, and soul, human nature at its best is found in him. Possessing also the perfect mind and heart of Deity, he was able to unfold the excellence of the divine nature, and in such terms of human life as man could comprehend. "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father," he said to Philip; and as men have come to know Christ they have come to know God.

1. It brings us very close to Jesus to know that he had a birthday just like the rest of us, that as a helpless infant he was dependent upon a human mother, upon the bounty of her breast, that her arms nestled him, her hands ministered to his wants, and her love comforted him. The lowliness of the circumstances of his birth and the poverty

of the place in which he was born identify him with the humblest of earth's children, and reminds us that he was intensely human; while the marvelous light that shone from the Judean night sky on the occasion of his birth, and the message and the song of praise and promise from the angel host, as well as the adoration of the shepherds at the manger in Bethlehem, proclaim the baby Jesus as none other than the Son of God and the Saviour of the world.

Heaven and earth came together when Jesus was born. He beautified the lowly things of life by coming into this world in extremely needy conditions. Wealth and wisdom found their highest honor at the feet of the infant Christ, when the wise men of the East came with their costly gifts and their reverent worship. No longer now can poverty and a humble station be considered as barriers to the presence and favor of the Most High. No longer now can riches and learning be esteemed as sufficient in themselves to satisfy the demands of the immortal soul of man.

2. As we follow Jesus in his earthly ministry we find revealed in his personality and character: tenderness, compassion, courage, strength, wisdom, purity, and love; utter sacrifice of self and unflinching endurance of suffering; unswerving will in absolute fidelity to the will of God; complete mastery of the material forces of land and sea and sky; dominion in the realm of spirit, where angels ministered unto him and demons fled at his command; power to break the bans of death and open the gates of life—features of the divine beauty both gentle and masterful.

3. “A man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief.” Yes, that was said of Jesus, and truly said. To us sorrow and grief wear no halo of beauty. But Jesus has taught us that sorrows may be God’s clouds that let down his grace like rain to make our hearts yield fruits of righteousness, and that griefs may be God’s plowshares that break the hardened surface of our earth-bound interest, in order that we may receive the showers

and sunshine of his love. And when our self-absorbed crust is broken by the grief, and the cloud sorrow has dissolved itself and entered into us, we shall see Christ's face more clearly and shall send up to him the fragrance of devotion and yield to him the ripened fruits of character. Not only when the sky is clear and fragrant winds caress the soul may the beauty of life be found, but also when storm winds drive lost hopes like dead leaves far away into the darkness, and misfortunes rattle down their cutting sleet upon the uncovered heart; for Christ reveals the transiency of earthly interests and the permanence, the fullness, the power, the glory of the life that is hid with him in God.

Jesus transformed the cross, so long a sign of shame and an instrument of torture, into a symbol of redemption and a pledge of forgiveness and peace. The agony in Gethsemane and the bleeding form of the Son of God upon the cross on Calvary find their justification in the redeemed souls of

men, that have accepted the offered sacrifice and render a joyful obedience to God's will. Jesus made the cross an emblem of supreme beauty.

4. "I am the light of the world," said Jesus, and the claim has proved true. Men have seen as never before since Jesus came. By means of light the activities of the world are carried on; mistakes are avoided, dangers discovered, disasters averted, labors accomplished, goals reached. Jesus is the source of all illumination: material light, light of truth, light of righteousness, light of love. Sunlight is God-light, for by his creative genius was the sun conceived. His hand kindled its blazing fires, and from his laboratories they are maintained. When men walk by the light of the sun, they find their way. When men walk by Christ, they do not stumble in the darkness of error, ignorance, and sin; nor do they lose their way in the maze of life's puzzling problems. They discover the grounds upon which individual honor and

capacity are founded. They find the underlying principles upon which all worthy institutions are builded. No individual, no community, no state can miss the path to peace and power while "the Light of the World" shines clear upon the situation and men have eyes to see and wisdom to heed.

Light not only reveals beauty, but light makes beauty. The sun floods the earth with light. Verdant hills and fertile plains with their growing fields are brought to view. The sun himself has put that verdure on the hills and made those growing fields upon the fertile plains. Revealed are myriad shades of red and gold and pink and purple of fruits in tended orchards, while gorgeous colors and delicate hues of cultivated flower-gardens are seen, as well as those of wild-blown bloom on lonely wastes. The sun has placed those color pigments in the fruits and flowers. Jesus makes the beauty of life. Is there beauty in the heart of compassion, in kindness, in purity, in courage, in heroism, in unselfish service, in the coun-

tenance and soul of a loving friend? Jesus brought these virtues into being, and has nurtured them by his stimulating and sustaining power of light. Health and joy and growth and strength must have light for their continuance and development. Jesus is the light that brings the virtues of man to realization, completes their perfection, and reveals the excellence of their beauty.

5. Jesus is the way, the safe, sure, perfect way to a glorious destination. Jesus is the way through this world's wilderness of complex problems, tangled motives, and interminable growths of ignorance, selfishness, and prejudice. Jesus is the way when other ways look feasible and inviting, yet lead astray and end in shame and death. Jesus is the way across life's uncharted seas that heave and rock and bellow from raging storms of hate and lust and pride and greed. Jesus is the way through the darkness of adversity and misfortune, through the blinding mists of sorrow, through the deep night of grief. Jesus is the way through tempta-

tion, through its allurements and its lies. Jesus is the way for those who have lost their road and have wandered into the barren wastes of transgression; for those who have become mired in the sloughs of iniquity; for those who have fallen into the pits of despair. Jesus is the way from sin to holiness, from death to life, eternal life. Jesus is the way home, the soul's home, the Father's house.

6. Jesus is the truth—the truth with respect to all industry, science, invention, art, philosophy, sociology, commerce, statesmanship, morals, and religion. When scientific discoveries are made, the nature and laws of substance as endowed by Christ are found; for he created them and “without him was nothing made.” Man's part is to search out the nature of substance and find its controlling laws. Natural laws are God's laws, from those that control the tiniest pebble on the hillside, which throbs in response to the touch of the morning sunbeam, to those which order the sun himself,

ninety-three million miles away in distance, whose heart is a rushing tempest of fire and whose mighty power holds the on-sweeping planets in their courses.

(1) The laws of lever, cog, band, friction, heat, light, steam, electricity, and chemical action—all are God's laws. The inventor merely learns mechanical relationships and applies their laws. The chemist finds the qualities of matter and by analysis, reductions, and combinations produces a formula before unknown. God gives to inventor and scientist the material and the mind with which to work. Though they may work without any reference to or recognition of the Great Creator, as they arrive at truth in their respective spheres they are none the less, in the material world, workers together with the God of truth.

(2) Jesus is the truth concerning all industrial life. Labor and capital have a hard time adjusting their claims. Why? Because each is actuated by a principle which Jesus condemned, the principle of

selfishness. Eliminate selfishness and substitute the principle which Jesus advocated and exemplified, which is love, and all differences disappear. This has been done in some instances and it has worked beautifully; capitalist and laborer both receive their dues and are satisfied. It is simple enough, but it is hard for the unregenerate mind to comprehend. As long as men, individually or collectively, are moved by selfishness, so long will there be unrest and dissatisfaction. Jesus is the truth in trade and commerce as found in community, in state, or between the nations of the earth. There is no other solution of industrial problems. Jesus, the Son of God, is the solution and the only solution.

In establishing harmonious and helpful conditions in the community the social worker is successful only as he builds upon the foundation principles enunciated by Christ. The home builder succeeds in finding domestic peace and felicity only as his family life is regulated by the teachings of

Jesus. The statesman leads his country into realms of honor, prosperity, and permanent national power only as he is able to get his countrymen to accept and put in practice those fundamental truths of life proclaimed by Jesus Christ. Society, home, and state become beautiful when they embody the teaching and the spirit of the Son of God.

(3) Jesus is the truth with regard to morals. There have been many teachers of morals in all the ages of the world's history. None have approached Jesus in thoroughness of moral analysis. Even Moses, inspired as he was, whose teachings have done so much for the moral government of the world, did not enunciate the ultimate quality of moral responsibility. Jesus traced this fundamental quality of moral character to its source, the thought and desire. Whoso looketh and lusteth is guilty, though the overt act is not committed. Morality and religion are so closely related that it is very hard to differentiate them. One cannot be truly moral unless one be truly religious.

The immoral act finds its rise in the thought and desire. If one's thought and desire be immoral, immoral deeds will follow, unless one is restrained by motives of expediency, fear, shame, or what not. If one refrains from the deed through such motives, one cannot be accounted moral. The character is unsound, immoral. The fountain must be cleansed if the stream is to be pure. So taught Jesus. The genuineness of moral beauty is found in Jesus and in him alone.

(4) Jesus is the truth with respect to religion. The world has had many religions through all the periods of its history, some of them, for their time, not bad. Jesus gave the world the true religion, the religion that saves man, body, mind, and soul. The religion of Jesus, if accepted without reservation, will remove every evil from the heart, will foster and bring to the beauty of perfection all the good within man, and will make possible every virtue that God can bestow. The religion of Jesus is one of hope, of enlargement, of joy, of peace, of

liberty, of infinite beauty, life, power, and glory. It is freedom from sin, possession of holiness, union with God, the All-wise, All-powerful, All-compassionate Father. The beauty of religion is found in Jesus and in him alone.

Jesus did not modify, but intensified, the estimate of sin. According to him, sin is not only an error, a mistake, a misfortune, but an inevitable and direful calamity. Sin is death. He revealed the deformity of sin not only by his teaching, but by contrast with his sinless life. Those who look upon Jesus, and have eyes to see, behold the beauty of holiness over against the ugliness of sin as found in perverse human nature. Jesus further shows that the penalties of sin are such as would bankrupt mankind in an attempt to pay and still leave the debt unpaid. He alone met the awful obligation and set man free. Jesus neutralized the venom of sin by receiving it, your sin and mine, into the laboratory of his own pure soul. Jesus cleanses the fountains of man's

soul so that it sends forth pure, sweet, healing floods of feeling, thought, and purpose. Jesus removes the deadly drag of past sins by canceling them. The sense of utter helplessness and unfitness caused by present sin is taken away because the sin is removed. The future holds no terrors when one advances in his name. Advance in his name. The darkness, if there be any, shall be lifted. Obstructions must give way. Victory and peace are certain through Jesus Christ.

Christ alone has solved the mystery of sin and has broken its power. "Regeneration is not merely a Christian theory; it is a dynamic experience. It is as really a part of the spiritual world as is transformation of the physical world. Matter everywhere sags, slumps, falls to the lowest possible level. Life seizes on it, lifts it up in the flower, in the tree, in the man—works a miracle before our admiring eyes. A thing of beauty tells the success that life has won. . . . 'Beauty is a sign language which, interpreted, reads, *Made in Heaven*.' Every

man who was once a dead weight, a mere mass of matter to be carried carefully in the home of the Church, yet in spite of everything slipping perpetually to the lowest level of self-indulgence, uselessness, parasitism, who comes under the sway of a force reaching down from above and lifting him out of his old-time degradations, is as undeniable an evidence of regeneration as the seed lifted out of the sand or mud into a flower is of transformation." (Charles Wood.)

Jesus gave to the world the correct conception of the one, true God. Many of the heathen nations supposed that Diety was invested in numerous personalities. These were worshiped by the performance of superstitious and often debasing rites. Others believed in one god, but far removed, so far away that he was not interested in the actual life of man, so mysterious that to think of him was confusion, so terrible that men were sore afraid when they thought him near. To the average Jew of ancient

time God was high and lifted up, not to be approached with confidence and with much assurance of receiving consideration from him. To the Jew of Jesus's time, God was dormant, one that had figured in the past history of the nation, but was no longer active in the affairs of mankind. So far as the Jewish Church was concerned as represented by the scribes and Pharisees, God was dead. Jesus so revealed the existence and nature of God that men felt him near, were encouraged to seek his forgiveness and to enter into the fellowship of his love. Jesus emphasized the Old Testament conception of the unity and personality of God, and disclosed features of his nature that men had never known. He gave us a new name for God, that of Father.

“All the degradation, even of the highest religions, has sprung from this, that their votaries forgot that religion was a communion with God himself, a life in the power of his character and will and employed it as the mere communication either of material

benefits or of intellectual ideas. It has been the mistake of millions to see in revelation nothing but the telling of fortunes, the recovery of lost things, decisions in quarrels, direction in war, or the bestowal of some personal favor. And though in these days we seek from the Bible many desirable things, such as history, philosophy, morals, formulas of assurance of salvation, the forgiveness of sins, maxims for conduct, yet all these avail us little, until we have found behind them, the living Character, the Will, the Grace, the Urgency, the Almighty Power, by trust in whom and communion with whom alone they are added unto us." (George Adam Smith.)

7. Jesus is the life. Life cannot be defined. Its manifestations, however, are evident. Some understanding of its nature may be gotten by an observation and a study of these manifestations. Thus may be gained a better knowledge of the Author of life.

(1) A marked characteristic of life is its power of appropriation. Place one end of a

dead stick within the ground, water it, cultivate it, let the sunshine fall upon it, give it air. The stick will rot. A live stick with a few appendages called roots, if planted in the soil and given the same attention, will grow. It will appropriate and assimilate the elements that made the dead stick rot and will transmute them into fiber, bark, leaf, flower, and fruit. Cattle appropriate the grass and grain and turn them into flesh and bone. The mind appropriates and assimilates the facts and forces of the world in which it lives and turns them into utilities for daily need, into inspirations to greater achievements, and into specifications for enlarged and more intensive plans of activity. When mind life dies, though body life continues, the being that is left no longer utilizes the facts and forces of the world for good. Confinement and protection must be provided for the one whose mind life dies.

The soul that has the life of Christ within appropriates all experiences through which

it passes, whether they be those of sorrow or of joy, of failure or of success, of struggle or of peace, and changes them into the beauty and the strength of noble seasoned character. Wherever living trees are planted in the ground, however bare the soil may be, with proper care, the yield of flower and fruit will come. Wherever men are found that have the life divine within them, however bare of good may seem the place in which they find themselves, there will appear in them the attributes of beauty found in Jesus Christ. Such the transforming power of Christ—life in the soul that hard conditions, if they are necessary, are not simply to be borne but may be made to yield adornments for the soul.

Jesus was subject to influences and to conditions that had brought to other men despair. Poverty, loneliness, lack of approval, avowed disapproval, misunderstanding, misrepresentation, and bitter opposition were utilized by him and made to yield nutrition for his character and for his work.

Trouble in the breast of Jesus changed to peace. He did not turn away the cup of death, but drank it to its bitter dregs. But when death had entered into him it was death no longer. The victory gained upon the cross was not, as men surmised, a victory of death, but that of life.

(2) A prevailing feature of life is variety. There are 50,000 known species of the butterfly family. The display of a collection of butterflies in a museum is bewildering in the number of shades and combinations of color shown. The work of a human artist seems pitiable in comparison. The best that man can do is to copy, but imperfectly, the array of colors there revealed. When one succeeds in approaching in his art the wonder and the beauty thus displayed, that one is called an artist. What about that great Artist who conceived those delicate tints and glowing hues and traced them on those animated wings of gauze, and sent them fluttering here and there to settle now and then at will on leaf and flower,

radiant wisps of life afloat on summer breeze? And yet butterfly life is a very insignificant part of life.

Bird life is more advanced and variety therein is more enlarged. To colorful plumage and graceful sweep of wings is added call note trills that come like dancing rills of joy from throated music fountains. Bird life is beautiful in form, in plumage, in movement, in habit, and in song. What about Him who conceived this beauty, worked it out, put life within it, and sent it flying, singing, rejoicing throughout the earth? And yet bird life is just a little part of this world life. If one could learn of all the beauty that there is in flowers, in shrubs, in trees, in birds, in fish of stream and sea, in wild things that inhabit woods or roam the plains or dwell in mountain homes, one would then just be beginning to get some idea of life's varied beauty.

In higher spheres of life this varied beauty still increases. It may be found in man's more perfect physical form, in the

endowments of his intellect, in the passion of his love, in the sweep of his imagination, in the royal dominance of his reason, in the regal sway of his volition, in the infinite reach of his immortal spirit. Then it is well to study human hearts and faces and human souls. Find those whose springs of thought, of feeling, and of will are fresh like living fountains. Listen to the baby's gurgle and feel the wriggle of its soft, sweet body in your arms. Learn childhood's secrets, the hopes and fears and loves that burn within the breast of little children. And look upon the face of youth, untrammelled and undismayed, and let the glow of its enthusiasm stir your heart and put to shame discouragement and fear. Stand in awe before the man who works and wins, who blends with persevering toil the zeal that guarantees success. Behold the tenderness and sacrifice of woman's love. Learn wisdom at the feet of aged ones who, on the heights of life, see the coming dawn of a life beyond.

The mind and character of Jesus are

infinite in the variety and beauty of their manifestation. All the ideas of grace, of harmony, and of utility, which have been wrought out in pleasing forms of fitness, capacity, and adaptation, were conceived and executed by Christ. His character is just as truly varied in its manifestations and in its adjustments as that of his creative genius. Jesus is the one universal character, the only one that has appeared in all the history of the world. The rich, the poor, the learned, the unlearned, the sick, the well, the young, the old—all alike may find in him a personal friend. Owing to temperamental, social, educational, financial, and racial differences, you and I cannot make for ourselves a very large circle of intimate friends. We cannot understand nor be understood by very many people. No such limitations are found in Jesus. Through all the centuries to the present time his friends are numbered by the millions. He is the universal friend.

In making of himself congenial company

in such widely separated groups, the Saviour does not interfere with their peculiar personal traits, provided that these traits are not blameworthy. Neither does he change the racial characteristics of the nations of the earth. He so identifies himself with all the different nationalities that they feel he is their very own. To the Christian American, Jesus is the one perfect, ideal man; but the ideal is American. To the Chinese Christian, Jesus is also the one perfect, ideal man; but the ideal is Chinese; and so it is with those of all the other races.

His discernment of the needs of each is so clear, his ability is so great, and his sympathetic interest in the welfare of every one is so genuine and so deep that there is positively no one but that may find in him a very present help, an abiding loving friend, and an almighty personal Saviour. To every one who will accept it, he gives the conscious realization of his mighty, saving power. Jesus does not belong to any one class, any one race, to any one age. He is the one universal character.

(3) Another characteristic of life's nature is its productiveness. This feature is obvious and needs no illustration. We gather fruit and the trees are left to bear again next year, knowing well that life in them, with proper care, will bring forth fruit again in season. Mind life produces thought; heart life, affection. The beauty of the mind is found alone in that which it produces; while love and trust together, with their kindred virtues, which result in kindly deeds and acts of mercy, are products that unfold the beauty of the heart. The Christian life is a productive life. St. Paul enumerates the fruits of spiritual life: "Love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance." Beautiful virtues of the Christian life! "By their fruits ye shall know them."

From Jesus Christ comes sustenance for all life on earth. We make a vast mistake when we believe a seed has life inherent, apart and alone. Should God withdraw himself, no seed could germinate. The seed

is just God's method of perpetuating that phase of life which he ordained. "In him we live, and move, and have our being." Our physical life is just as dependent upon his power as is our spiritual life. The difference is that he has made our spiritual life subject to our choice. He gives us physical life for a period, then offers spiritual life forevermore. If accepted, he guarantees to nourish and sustain it throughout eternity. An apple tree may bear for fifty years, an olive tree for one thousand years, and the Sequoia of the high Sierras will produce foliage and cones for five thousand years. But trees will die and their productiveness will cease. Not so of Him who is the "tree of life whose leaves are for the healing of the nations." "Because I live," said Jesus, "ye shall live also."

(4) And still another manifestation of life is power. Life is the strongest of all forces. It is stronger than any material force. The pull of gravitation is down, but it cannot hold back the growing plant. To

the extent of its endowment, the plant grows upward and in spite of gravity. An acorn dropped within the crevice of a mountain cliff sends tendril roots throughout the interstices of its rocky home. During the first year's growth these rootlets are so frail and tender that they could be crushed between two fingers of the hand. Let fifty years pass by. Those rootlets have become great gnarled and twisted cables, pulsating in the confines of their stony channels. Some day in spring, when the sap is running strong, those bound-up roots that need more room give one expansive throb. The big rock, that had long withstood the thrust of life in growing root, now trembles and gives way and falls with thunderous crash. But this is life within its lower forms.

Human life is stronger than all other kinds of earthly life, because it is endowed with mind, a form of life possessed by no other part of earth's creation. It took fifty years for the roots of the oak to prize loose the boulder from the precipice. Man, with a

stick of dynamite which he has made, can do it in a moment, and incidentally carry home the shattered fragments of the oak for firewood. Man at the beginning, apparently, was a very helpless creature. Confined to one locality by wilderness on one side, by impassable mountains on another, by raging rivers here and surging seas out yonder; subject to freezing cold and suffocating heat, to sting of poisonous insect and bite of venomous serpent; the prey of cruel beasts—it seemed that man had no chance to live. But man could think. So man sat down and thought, the thing the dull material forces that surrounded him could never do. The wild beasts could not get their thoughts together in such order as to arrive at logical conclusions. They had instinct unerring so far as it could go, but instinct could not compete with the ingenuity of rational will.

Man thought him out some weapons of defense and conquest, means of penetrating the wilderness, of scaling the mountains,

of crossing the rivers, and of sailing the seas. Mind force took dominance of all the forces of the world. Great libraries are now required to tell even in part what mind has done. If all were written, there could not be made enough books to tell the story. A full account to-day would be quite incomplete to-morrow. Overnight some new discovery or some new invention would be made. The power of mind is beautiful in its majestic strength.

The power of spiritual life is stronger than that of mind life, for it includes mind life and more. Spiritual life is the strongest force in the universe because it is God life. Spirit can do what nothing else can do. Spirit can save and Spirit alone. Other forces may seem stronger, but in the last analysis they break down in comparison and in results.

Money power is great, but money power, as such, is in the end destructive. Political power, exercised without regard to the God of wisdom and justice, at last breaks down

or brings disaster. Selfish interest may become a very active and potential force, but the end attained is just the opposite of the one desired. Selfishness does not save self, but destroys self. The force of mind, to whatever channel directed, may exhibit strength; but if there is no spiritual apprehension associated with its processes, and no recognition of God in the application of its results, mind force thus exercised will finally bring trouble in place of peace, even death instead of life. Spiritual life alone can save, for it is God life.

Jesus exemplified in himself the power of spirit life. He could control the physical forces of earth. The winds and waves obeyed him. Blind eyes were made to see, deaf ears were made to hear, dumb mouths were made to speak, paralyzed limbs were made to leap, sick bodies were made to be well. Jesus had supreme control in the sphere of mind. He could divine the secret thoughts of others, not only in those present but also in those absent. He could

analyze men's motives and take the measure of their sincerity. He knew the mechanism of the human mind and could set it in order. The insane were restored to sanity. He could sound the depths of the human heart and determine the degree of its loves and hates. He could, and can to-day, cleanse the heart of all unclean affection and establish there the fountain of pure love. He was supreme within the realm of spirit. Demons fled at his command and angels came upon his call." The spirits of those who had left the body, at the summons of the Son of God, came back and dead men lived again.

Satan tried to find some weakness in the character of Jesus, but assailed in vain the impregnable fortress of his soul. Death got hold of him, but could do nothing with him, could not keep him. He submitted himself to death, then turned on death within its own confines and conquered it. He laid down his life and took it up again. He is Master of life. He is life itself, *the* Life.

8. Not only does Jesus possess life in the fullness of its beauty and majesty, but also has the power, through the agency of the Holy Spirit, to communicate this life to others. This is his mission to mankind. He said: "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly." Again: "I am the resurrection and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die." And again: "He that believeth in me hath everlasting life." St. Paul said: "The gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." These scriptures and a host of others afford ample assurance of God's power and willingness to give to man the strongest of all forces, the power of life eternal.

The Christian need not fear nor be discouraged by the evil forces of this world. They often grieve and vex and hinder for a time, but they cannot prevent the development of the Christ-life in the soul nor bring

to naught service that is rendered in the name of Christ. Vain ambitions, foolish pursuits, cowardly injustices, ignominious prides, cruel taunts, and brutal greeds are frequently encountered in the Christian's progress to the crowning glory of eternal life. But worldly forces are noisy, rude, apparent. They have a show of strength which they in fact do not possess. Because of their temporal nature and of their inferior and often iniquitous source they cannot prevail. Opposition to them proves good discipline for courage, faith, and endurance. Combat with them strengthens the very sinews of the soul. The Christian exercises superior forces, good forces, life forces which are quiet, unassuming, tender, but very, very strong. Honor, justice, kindness, compassion, patience, purity, truth, and love are potential powers as well as virtues. The fact is, all virtues have power, life power. In the end they triumph and triumph eternally.

There is no task nor duty that belongs to

us as children of God that cannot be performed through the agency of the Holy Spirit, who is the representative on earth of the Son of God. There is no excellency of character that should be ours that we cannot attain through the spirit life of Jesus Christ established within the soul. The evils that surround us shall come to naught. Their glories shall be whirled away like wreaths of dissipating smoke before the wrath of an offended and righteous God. Righteousness shall endure. When shall have passed the earth itself, its ashes blown like meteor dust upon the wandering drifts of the universe, we shall be safe at home with God, perfecting in his good way the infinite endowments of our beings, glad in the consciousness of abiding security, happy in the fulfillment of the ever-enlarging mission of our immortal spirits.

There is much confusion as to the nature of spiritual life. It is assumed by many that spiritual life is just a *part* of one's being; by

some it is esteemed a very insignificant part: whereas it includes the whole of personality, intellect, sensibility, and will. One's religion is not just a part of one's life, to be cultivated and exercised in a peculiar province all its own. Religion includes all of life. It requires the whole man, body and mind and soul. Jesus made it plain that in order to be his disciple, discipleship must be made first; that a whole-hearted, whole-bodied, whole-minded service is the only kind he could accept.

This absolute surrender to Christ does not interfere with the application of the mind to any worthy exercise, nor interfere with any legitimate affection, neither does it preclude any laudable activity. This obedience to Christ is a guarantee of strength. The intellect will think more clearly, the heart will respond only to that which is good, and volition will be directed only to those projects which are commendable. In addition, divine wisdom and love and strength are pledged to coöperate. "If

any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him. But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering." (St. James.) "God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us." (St. John.) *All power* is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore: . . . lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." (Jesus Christ.)

Spiritual life is a conscious life, as much so as in our animal or rational life. Do you know that you live? that you think and love and strive and rejoice? Yes, indeed! Then you may know that your sins are forgiven, that you are at peace with men and God. Surely we would not have been created with a sense of certainty in regard to the less important facts of our being and left without the means of establishing without doubt those facts of essential and eternal value. Yes, you may know whether your will is in accord with the divine will or at variance with it. You may know that this

eternal life is now within you, giving you dominion over sin and making you brave and true and strong and full of confidence, hope, and peace. You may know that you have eternal life. "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God." (St. Paul.) "He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself: . . . and this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son." (St. John.)

Assurance is essential to success, whatever be the undertaking. Success can only come when confidence is established. The business man succeeds when he is assured of the integrity and coöperation of those with whom he is associated; when he believes in himself, in his fitness for his task; when he is convinced of the needs for the product of his labor. The religious man attains success in his religion when he doubts not that the promises of the Head of the Church will be fulfilled, and believes that they are fulfilled in every present requirement; when he has

a deep consciousness of God's approval and in his constant guiding presence. Assurance of salvation is not only a privilege, but a necessity.

Definitely Christ fulfills all prophecy concerning himself. A prophecy by Isaiah has been beautifully portrayed by a painting in one of the great art galleries. The picture is that of a mother kneeling by the casket in which had been placed the body of her dead child. Like a white rosebud of early spring, withered by untimely frost, the little one lay quiet, robbed of the promise of a life of fragrant usefulness and beauty. The mother kneeling there is looking across the casket through the window upon the glory of the setting sun, which is flooding the death chamber with glowing but decreasing radiance. Underneath the picture are inscribed the words of the prophet: "The sun shall be no more thy light by day; neither for brightness shall the moon give light unto thee; but the Lord shall be unto thee an

everlasting light, and thy God thy glory. Thy sun shall no more go down; neither shall thy moon withdraw itself; for the Lord shall be thine everlasting light, and the days of thy mourning shall be ended." Beautiful prophecy! Wonderfully fulfilled in Jesus Christ! His resurrection and his promise of resurrection to all who believe on him move the distracted, desolate human heart to a great hope and to a steadfast confidence in a restoration and enlargement of all life's worth-while interests. To every one who trusts him he witnesses through the Holy Spirit his living presence, which is life for this world and life forevermore.

This endless life of peace and victory, which begins on earth and never ends, is compensation beyond computation for all the heartaches and pain of struggle through which this earthly pilgrimage takes us. "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. And

God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain; for the former things are passed away. And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new." This is from the message of the risen and ascended Lord which he gave to the beloved disciple John on Patmos.

Jesus Christ is the Author and Giver of eternal life. "He that hath the Son hath life, and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life." (St. John.) Thus endowed, man may appropriate and assimilate all that is good in the legitimate and necessary experiences that come to him, whether they be experiences of happiness or of anguish, of peace or of struggle, of success or of failure, of renown or of renunciation. He may display much of the varied beauty and beneficence found in Christ. He may exercise in large measure the strength which Jesus

manifested, upheaving mountains that obstruct his God-appointed way and casting them into the depths of the sea, never to be raised again. If necessary, this Christ-man may go through fire to his task and come therefrom with even no smell of fire upon his garments. The grave shall be to his triumphant feet a passageway through which he treads into "the city that hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God." Regions of light shall be his final habitation, realms of power his dominion. Spheres of influence without limitation and domains for service without obstruction shall be his heritage. Life in perfection of adjustment, in completeness of satisfaction, in fullness of exhilaration and in the harmony and splendor of divine beauty shall be forever his possession. Eternal life!

V

CONCLUSION

IT is claimed that at an early date the fine arts were given more attention and better development by heathen nations than by God's own chosen people Israel. This is true with respect to some of the fine arts, but not of all. Sculpture and architecture were brought to a high state of excellence by heathen artists. But the ancient Hebrews were interested in a finer art than that of the so-called fine arts. Their art consisted, not in fashioning into perfect contour and pose a cold and lifeless form from bronze or marble, but in molding a human personality into a being possessed of all the splendid attributes of truth and righteousness. The material upon which the Hebrew artist worked was not insensate stone, but sentient soul with an eternal destiny. His quarry was not a rock pile, but the deep consciousness of his own im-

mortal Spirit. Each workman found within himself the block to be hewn and shaped and polished. His ideal was not a combination of all the finer points of physical perfection, but the symmetrical blend of all the virtues commended by divine revelation. With the chisel of conviction driven by the hammer blows of indomitable will, lighting each stroke by a persistent and transcendent faith, he wrought well. Witness Abraham, Joseph, Moses, Joshua, Ruth, Naomi, Samuel, David, Esther, Daniel, and Isaiah. The statues of Phidias would suffer in comparison. If there is an art gallery in heaven, these worthies of old will surely be on exhibition. It will be worth while to look on them.

Mark this: Those of heathen nations who attained eminence in art were reverent worshipers of the highest deity they could find, and they used the best moral and spiritual light afforded them. This shows that the moral ideal and the recognition of Deity are necessary to the finest art in any

age. Painting, music, and even sculpture have come to the highest perfection in the Christian era. The inspiration and interpretation of the Christian ideal has lifted these arts to hitherto unknown realms of beauty.

Note this also: Not only is it necessary to the production of art to have a great soul, illuminated by divine light, in order to produce it, but it is also necessary for those who interpret it and for those who receive the interpretation to be great in soul and thus illuminated. Much of our fine music is spoiled in the rendition. Mean little creatures, contracted by selfishness and pride, though possessed of trained voices or hands, fail utterly to express the meaning of those great composers whose very souls throbbed with the heavenly harmonies which they reproduced. The rendition is lifeless, soulless, having the form without the power. Or if the one who sings or plays measures up to something of the full meaning of the composition, and the one who listens is not

moved, the hearer himself is convicted of littleness and meanness. The absence of technical training in the hearer is not a good excuse for lack of appreciation. Lack of training in the listener may prevent him from getting the meaning; however, it is not his ignorance of technique, but because he knows not the regions of high and holy thought, sentiment, and aspiration. A great-souled musician with proper gifts and training, rendering a great composition before an audience of sincere and reverent people, even though they be untutored, will transport his audience with him into spheres of harmony where the author of harmony dwells.

The conclusion is inevitable that in order to apprehend the beauty of God, whether revealed in nature, in man, or in Jesus Christ, there must be such an adjustment of thought, feeling, and taste that the impact of the divine revelation thereon may be sensible and real, forming in the soul true and ample conceptions of the beauty of

God. This adjustment is made by the Divine Spirit. St. Paul said: "The things of God knoweth no man. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God." To understand this revelation of beauty wherever found, a knowledge of Him who has made the revelation is essential. The spirit of the Master is necessary to interpret the works of the Master and to comprehend the Master himself. The Christian alone can apprehend the fullness and glory of the beauty of God as found in nature, in man, and in Jesus Christ.

"And let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us." (Moses.)

Deacidified using the Bookkeeper process.
Neutralizing agent: Magnesium Oxide
Treatment Date: April 2005

Preservation Technologies

A WORLD LEADER IN PAPER PRESERVATION

111 Thomson Park Drive
Cranberry Township, PA 16066
(724) 779-2111

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



0 014 022 349 9